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Letter dated 20 September 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of a letter dated 17 September 2001 from the President of Georgia, H.E. Mr. Eduard Shevardnadze (see annex).

I would be most grateful if you would kindly circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 166, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Peter **Chkheidze**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 20 September 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

President of Georgia

17 September 2001, Tbilisi

To the Secretary-General of the United Nations
Heads of State of the Security Council Member States,
Heads of State of the nations Members of the United Nations

The threats we have all been concerned with for some time have now become all too real. If today's world is incapable of averting mass murder and destruction carried out by a small group of people through relatively simple means, we must not rule out even worse things ahead. Thousands dying in a matter of minutes suggests that terrorists wielding weapons of mass destruction are at the door.

The tragedy of several days ago has long been in the making. It was begotten out of the complacency and negligence with which the international community has treated such menaces as aggressive nationalism, aggressive separatism, xenophobia, fanaticism and hatred.

Today a war is being waged on democracy, freedom, tolerance and human life itself. Do we want to prevail in this war? Do we want to avoid entering a new era next to which the savagery of twentieth century conflicts pales in comparison? If we want to keep the victory in the cold war and the new world order from becoming empty words, urgent measures must be taken. We must execute a full-scale response. Failure to do so would be the most abject cowardice, a crime.

It may be regarded as somewhat presumptuous for the Head of a small State to offer advice or even venture an opinion on a matter of such vital importance to the world. The size of my country, however, does not dissuade me. I firmly believe that each of us — great or small — has a share of responsibility to future generations and if only because of that we are fully entitled to voice our views and ask questions. Why did we lose our vigilance? Was it the abrupt end to the tensions generated by the unending nuclear brinkmanship of the cold war that caused us to lapse into a state of lethargic indifference? Having been an active participant in those events, I tend to think that was the reason. Now, however, it is time to wake up. We have found ourselves once again on the brink.

I fully support the efforts aimed at creating a coalition of countries that would take on the immediate task of seeing that the perpetrators of this horrible crime and those who harbour them are brought to account. I also want to say that Georgia, a country which in the last decade has suffered greatly from many types of terrorist acts, will certainly take an active part in this coalition. But there are also countries that, for different reasons, may today decline to participate. Some may not even be invited to join. This will result in a world divided into two sets of nations: those actively fighting terrorism (that is, the coalition) and those passive observers who will have assumed no commitment, no responsibilities or, worse, have not even voiced their anti-terrorist stance.

For this reason, in order to achieve unity around a number of bedrock principles, the United Nations, the only universal global organization, must convene a summit of heads of Member States that will address the fight against terrorism, genocide, ethnic cleansing, mass murder and the sources that feed them, such as aggressive nationalism, aggressive separatism, xenophobia, fanaticism and bigotry. Let the grief and sorrow of the 11 September 2001 tragedy be a clarion call. The world has never had a greater potential to counter these deadly threats. This meeting must be convened under the aegis of the Security Council, to work out concrete steps and recommendations which will be binding for all States willing to participate in the summit. I do not have in mind the issuing of yet another innocuous set of resolutions of condemnation and benign appeals, I am referring to effective, mandatory measures against those forces whose might, however few they may be, rests in our own perpetual hesitation and unwieldiness. As the furor mounts, we must also see that those who are themselves guilty of harbouring terrorists do not hide among the chorus of anti-terrorism rhetoric.

Let us all consider why we have permitted the Security Council — the institution responsible for *world security* — to atrophy into such a feckless state. Why do so many appeals to the Council to use all levers allowed by its Charter, including those made by Georgia, remain unheeded? Why, to this day, does the question of permanent-member status for Germany, Japan and several other States remain undecided? Is it not abundantly clear that the Security Council in its present form has exhausted its potential, and needs a fresh infusion of life?

I have personally been targeted by those enemies of freedom and democracy who have tried to physically exterminate anyone dedicated to the establishment and preservation of those values, and I know too well that democracy can only prevail if it can defend itself. We, however, have begun to take it for granted that democracy itself means security. This grisly episode has, I believe, finally dispelled that illusion.

This is a decisive moment for mankind. We will either succeed in upholding the values so dear to us all, or we will dismally fail.

(*Signed*) Eduard **Shevardnadze**